

What is Rat Lungworm Disease?



The rat lungworm can cause a disease called angiostrongyliasis (rat lungworm disease) which can affect the brain and spinal cord.

Symptoms may include severe headache, stiffness of the neck and back, skin tingling and sensitivity, sensitivity to light, hallucinations, nausea and vomiting.



Cuban Slug



Semi Slug

Foods such as raw produce, raw or undercooked snails, freshwater prawns, crabs and frogs can be contaminated by an unseen parasite *Angiostrongylus cantonensis* (rat lungworm). Fish do not spread this parasite. The rat lungworm is found most often in snails and slugs and has also been found in the flatworm. The worm infects rats, which pass the parasite to snails, slugs, freshwater prawns, crabs and frogs, not humans.



Baby Semi Slug on nickel



Giant African Snail

Prevention

DO NOT eat raw foods contaminated with the slime* from snails or slugs or visible snail or slugs. **WASH PRODUCE** completely and boil snails, freshwater prawns, crabs, and frogs for **AT LEAST 3-5 MINUTES**. Do not handle snails and slugs with bare hands. Apply slug bait to eliminate slugs from your garden. Cover your catchment tanks to prevent slugs and snails from having access. Controlling rodents can also help control the rat lungworm. *If you think you may have angiostrongyliasis, see your health care provider and let him/her know of your exposures.*

*Scientists are not sure whether exposure to slime can make you sick

For more information call the Hawai'i District Health Office Disease Investigations office: 808-933-0912 or see CDC website: <http://www.dpd.cdc.gov/DPDx/HTML/Angiostrongyliasis.htm>



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